



Newsletter



NEWSLETTER, ISSUE 1 | OCTOBER 2021

The 1st ASTRA project Newsletter!

Advancing Strategic Management, Leadership and Fundraising in Higher Education in Asia



BACKGROUND

Higher education in Asia is facing many unprecedented challenges. The race to restructure and reform higher education systems is accelerating among developing countries in the region. Most countries have resorted to granting more institutional autonomy to higher education institutions (HEIs) with the hope that the increasing management flexibility will expedite the process of higher education development. Increasing autonomy seems to be the aim of most countries in the region, holding the key to solving the problems and securing the success of higher education development.

partner institutions, and their operation will be managed from the staff that is going to be trained during the capacity building programme.

MAIN GOAL

The overall goal of ASTRA is to support the operation of **Higher Education Institutions in Laos and Thailand**, by **increasing** their staff's **capacity** for accessing financial resources through the exploitation of relevant donor-funded Research and Development Programmes in the areas of **ICT and Social Sciences**. In the framework of ASTRA, four new R&D centers will be set up in the four

ASTRA at a glance

- **3-year** project (Jan.21 - Jan.24)
- **8 institutions** - 5 countries: EU & Asia
- One comprehensive **training programme** on accessing funds
- **60 academic staff** from Laos and Thailand trained
- **4 new R&D Innovation Hubs** (2 in Laos and 2 in Thailand)
- More than **500 academic & professional staff** directly reached through dissemination & **exploitation activities**

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OUR PROGRESS

During the first nine months of the project, the ASTRA consortium has been performing extensive desk and field research on the specific existing needs and resources in the higher education system in the two partner countries in Thailand and Laos, focusing on the four targeted institutions.

A Research Protocol has been developed by the University of Florence with thorough guidelines, common tools, and templates to conduct concise research, combining both desktop and field research components. As of October 2021, the four participating institutions from Laos and Thailand have been following the guidelines towards conducting the research in their respective contexts with support from University of Florence in order to:

- Analyse existing HEI governance and funding structures and methodologies
- Define skills' building needs of HEI staff in leadership, management, fundraising and networking
- Identify existing R&D consulting needs and funding opportunities in the ICT and the social science sector

Reports from each country with the research results will be produced and they will form the basis for the development

of the training programme targeted at the staff of partner institutions.

In addition, the project consortium has also set up internal procedures related to Quality Assurance, internal communication and dissemination activities. The [official project website](#) has been launched as well as [social media accounts](#) on which all information and updates on the project progress will be communicated.

ASTRA'S EXPECTED RESULTS

- Reports on governance, financing models and funding opportunities in ICT & social sciences in Laos and Thailand
- Training programme, targeted at the HEIs staff
- Capacity building programme, focusing on the transfer of knowledge and expertise from the EU experts to the trainers of the 4 partner institutions
- Set up of 4 new Research and Development Innovation Hubs in Laos and Thailand ensuring their sustainable operation and access to donor funded programmes

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